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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W
---------- 032306
R 071430Z AUG 73
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4602
INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY SANAA

S E C R E T JIDDA 3362

EXDIS

NICOSIA FOR AMBASSADOR CRAWFORD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SA, YE, US
SUBJ: SAUDI ARMS FOR YAR

REF: STATE 153922; SANAA 1440; STATE 152344

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR INFORMED PRINCE SULTAN INITIAL WASHINGTON REACTION TO GENERAL QABBAIN'S PLAN FOR MODERNIZATION OF YAR ARMY SAW IT AS TOO LARGE AND ELABORATE AND THAT IT REQUIRED PARING DOWN. PRESENT HIGHLY RESTRICTIVE MOOD IN CONGRESS MEANT THERE NO RPT NO PROSPECT USG COULD MAKE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION. SULTAN URGED PROMPTEST ACTION TOWARD FURTHER CONSIDER-ATION YAR ARMY PROPOSALS. EMBASSY WELL AWARE NEED KEEPING SAUDIS CLEARLY IN FRONT AS PARTY RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING LONG-RANGE MILITARY PROGRAM AID TO YEMEN, BUT CONSIDERABLE USMTM INPUT NECESSARY IF ANYTHING AT ALL TO BE ACCOMPLISHED ON PLANNING SIDE. WE WILL HAVE FURTHER SUGGESTIONS BY SEPTEL. END SUMMARY.

1. AT MEETING WITH PRINCE SULTAN AUGUST 5 I PASSED TO HIM CURRENT US VIEWS WITH REGARD TO PROSPECTS FOR REARMING
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YEMEN. USG HAS HAD UNDER CAREFUL REVIEW PROPOSALS WORKED

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UP BY GENERAL QABBANI WITH ASSISTANCE USMTM FOR MODERN-

IZATION OF YAR ARMY AS WELL AS PRINCE'S REQUEST WE CONSIDER FAVORABLY ASSUMING IMPORTANT SEGMENT COSTS OF SUCH PROJECT.

2. AS TO PLAN ITSELF, WASHINGTON REACTION HAS BEEN THAT IT IS MUCH TOO LARGE AND ELABORATE AND THAT AT OUTSET AT LEAST IT MUST BE PARED DOWN TO LEVEL WHICH YAR WITH ASSISTANCE OF ITS NEIGHBORS CAN HOPE TO HANDLE SUCCESSFULLY. CONCENPT OF CREATING SAUDI MAAG SEEMS SOUND ONE.

3. TOLD PRINCE SUGGESTION US PAY PART OF COST HAD BEEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED IN WASHINGTON BUT THERE NO PROSPECT AT ALL WE COULD MAKE CONTRIBUTION. CONGRESS IN EXTREMELY RESTRICTIVE MOOD REGARDING MILITARY AID FUNDS FOR CURRENT FISCAL YEAR. WE ARE HAVING GREATEST DIFFICULTY GETTING GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE FUNDS FOR EVEN THOSE COUNTRIES WHO HAVE DEPENDED UPON US IN SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE FOR HELP IN PAST. THERE IS NO SLACKENING, HOWEVER, IN US WILLING-NESS CONTINUE SUPPLY NECESSARY EQUIPMENT, SOME TRAINING TEAMS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGERIAL ADVICE--BUT NO MONEY.

4. SULTAN MADE LITTLE COMMENT EXCEPT TO ASK HOW SOON HE MIGHT EXPECT TO HEAR FINAL USG VIEWS ON MILITARY AID PROGRAM FOR YEMEN. REPLIED DEPT HAD ASSURED ME STUDY GOING FORWARD APACE AND THATI I HOPED HAVE COMMENTS FOR HIM SOON. ULTIMATE DECISION ON IMPLEMENTATION AND RESOURCES TO BE EMPLOYED WOULD, OF COURSE, BE SAUDI ARABIA'S, HOWEVER. SULTAN SAID THERE WAS URGENT NEED FOR PROMPT ACTION AND HE HOPED WE WOULD MOVE RAPIDLY.

5. TOOK OPPORTUNITY REMIND SULTAN THAT WHILE USG UNABLE MAKE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION YAR'S MILITARY DEVELOPMENT, YET WE ARE IN FACT PLAYING IMPORTANT AND HIGHLY COMMENDABLE ROLE TOWARD HELPING YEMENIS ECONOMICALLY. REVIEWED WITH HIM ESSENTIALS OF US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO YEMEN FOR FIFTEEN MONTHS PERIOD APRIL 1973, TO JUNE 1974, STRESSING TOTAL GRANT ELEMENT ALMOST NINE MILLION DOLLARS, INCLUDING US THREE-FOURTH

SHARE OF UN 1973 ASSISTANCE. FOOD RELIEF COMES TO THREE MILLION AND WE HAVE MADE VERY LARGE CONTRIBUTIONS TO IBRD PROJECTS. LEFT WITH SULTAN WRITTEN SUMMARY OF US ASSISTANCE. (PLAN LEAVE ANOTHER COPY NEXT FEW DAYS WITH DEPUTY FONMINISTER MAS'UD.)

6. COMMENT: DEPT CAN REST ASSURED WE REMAIN WELL AWARE NECESSITY KEEPING SAUDIS CLEARLY IN FOREFRONT AS

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PRINCIPAL, RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTING LONG-RANGE PROGRAM MILITARY RE-EQUIPPING OF YEMEN, AND WE INTEND REMIND SAUDIS OF THIS AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY. AT SAME TIME WE HAVE TO BE REALISTIC AS TO SAUDI CAPABILITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, USMTM OFFICERS FOUND GENERAL QABBANI DISCOURAG-INGLY INCAPABLE COPING WITH EVEN SIMPLEST PROBLEMS OF ANALYSIS REQUIRED EVOLVE GENERAL APPROACH TO RE-EQUIPPING YAR ARMY. NECESSARILY THERE WAS HEAVY USMTM IMPUT OR THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO RPT NO STAFF REPORT AT ALL. DEPT INTENTION TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS FOR PARING DOWN ARMY PROPOSAL SEEMS EMINENTLY REASONABLE SINCE MUST CONFESS WE HAD MISGIVINGS AT OUTSET AS TO SIZE BUT WERE PERSUADED TRANSMIT TO DOD AS EXEMPLAR OF POSSIBLE APPROACH AS MUCH AS FOR ITS PROVISION OF SPECIFIC DETAIL. SIMILARLY PROPOSALS FOR NAVY AND AIR FORCE HAVE SEEMED TO ELABORATE TO US AND WE HAVE HELD THEM BACK FOR FURTHER REVIEW. MORE SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS IN SUBSEQUENT MESSAGE.
THACHER

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